

CLAIM AMENDMENTS

What is claimed is:

1. (currently amended) A collapsible, portable, weight-supporting device, comprising:

a frame assembly including at least four brace frame-members and at least four hinge brackets interconnecting the brace members, wherein each of the hinge brackets permits pivotal movement about a generally vertical axis of one of the brace members relative to an adjacent one of the brace members for laterally collapsing the frame assembly from a use position with adjacent ones of the brace members generally perpendicularly oriented to a collapsed position with adjacent ones of the brace members parallel oriented; and

a seat assembly that is removably coupled to the frame assembly.

2. (original) The device of Claim 1, wherein the frame assembly is adapted for assembling without the need for tools or hardware.
3. (original) The device of Claim 1, wherein the device is in the form of a commode, a transfer bench, or a bath seat.

4. (currently amended) The device of Claim 1, wherein the seat assembly comprises:

a toilet seat having integrally formed pivotal couplings for removable attachment directly to the brace frame members; and

an integrally formed splash guard/collection pail having a side wall, ~~and a removable bottom,~~ and a severable connection zone that is positioned between the side wall and the bottom and adapted for separating the bottom from the side wall.

5. (currently amended) The device of Claim 1, wherein the seat assembly has a first channel and a second channel for removably receiving two of the brace frame members for mounting the seat assembly to the frame assembly without the need for tools or hardware, wherein the first channel and the second channel are oriented in a non-parallel arrangement.

6. (withdrawn)

7. (withdrawn)

8. (currently amended) A method of assembling a the weight-supporting device of Claim 1, comprising:

~~providing frame members, hinge brackets, and a seat assembly;~~

mounting the hinge brackets onto the brace frame members by hand, without tools or hardware, to form a frame; and

mounting the seat assembly onto the frame by hand, without tools or hardware.

9. (currently amended) The method of Claim 8, further comprising converting a pre-existing commode from a configuration for stand-alone ~~bedside~~-use to a configuration for use with a toilet by:

providing the seat assembly as a toilet seat and a collection pail with a side wall, removable bottom, and a severable connection zone that is positioned between the side wall and the bottom and adapted for separating the bottom from the side wall; and

removing the pail bottom to form a splash guard.

10. (new) The device of Claim 1, wherein the at least four brace members include at least one front brace member, at least one rear brace member, at least one left-side brace member, and at least one right-side brace member, and wherein when the device is in the use position, the front brace member and the rear brace member are oppositely positioned, and the left-side brace member and the right-side brace member are oppositely positioned.

11. (new) The device of Claim 10, wherein the brace members each define a generally vertical plane, and wherein when the device is in the use position, the plane of the front brace member and the plane of the rear brace member are oppositely positioned, and the plane of the left-side brace member and the plane of the right-side brace member are oppositely positioned, and when the device is in the collapsed position, the generally vertical planes of all four of the brace members are parallel.

12. (new) The device of Claim 11, wherein when the device is in the collapsed position, the plane of the front brace member and the plane of the rear brace member are parallel and offset from each other, and the plane of the left-side brace member and the plane of the right-side brace member are co-planar and between the plane of the front brace member and the plane of the rear brace member.

13. (new) The device of Claim 10, wherein each of the four brace members is generally U-shaped and includes two generally vertical segments and a generally horizontal segment therebetween, wherein the generally vertical segments of adjacent ones of the brace members are parallel and overlap relative to each other and are pivotally coupled together by the hinge brackets.

14. (new) The device of Claim 13, wherein the frame assembly further includes at least one left-side armrest member and at least one right-side armrest member, wherein the left-side and right-side armrest members are generally U-shaped and inverted relative to the corresponding left-side and right-side brace members.

15. (new) The device of Claim 10, wherein the frame assembly further includes at least one left-side armrest member and at least one right-side armrest member, wherein each of the hinge brackets includes a longitudinal body having two opposing end openings, wherein a first one of the end openings receives one of the side brace members and a second one of the end openings receives one of the side armrest members.

16. (new) The device of Claim 15, wherein the side brace member and the side armrest member that are received in the hinge bracket openings seat together telescopically within the body.

17. (new) The device of Claim 15, wherein the side brace member and the side armrest member that are received and seated together telescopically within the hinge bracket are also releasably coupled together by a pushpin-and-engagement-hole assembly.

18. (new) The device of Claim 10, wherein each of the hinge brackets includes at least one lateral semi-circumferential guide slot and at least two of the brace members each include a pin that is receivable in the guide slot to permit at least a 90-degree pivotal movement of the brace members with the pins.

19. (new) The device of Claim 18, wherein the pins are provided by pushpins that are depressible to a position out of the guide slots so that the brace members with the pushpins are removable from the hinge brackets.

20. (new) A collapsible, portable, weight-supporting, bath safety device, comprising:
- a frame assembly including at least four brace members and at least four hinge brackets interconnecting the brace members, wherein the hinge brackets each permit at least a 90-degree pivotal movement about a generally vertical axis of one of the brace members relative to an adjacent one of the brace members for laterally collapsing the frame assembly from a use position to a collapsed position, wherein the at least four brace members include at least one front brace member, at least one rear brace member, at least one left-side brace member, and at least one right-side brace member, wherein the brace members each define a generally vertical plane, wherein when the device is in the use position, the plane of the front brace member and the plane of the rear brace member are oppositely positioned, the plane of the left-side brace member and the plane of the right-side brace member are oppositely positioned, and the planes of adjacent ones of the brace members are generally perpendicularly oriented, and when the device is in the collapsed position, the plane of the front brace member and the plane of the rear brace member are parallel and offset from each other, and the plane of the left-side brace member and the plane of the right-side brace member are co-planar and between the plane of the front brace member and the plane of the rear brace member, and wherein each of the four brace members is generally U-shaped and includes two generally vertical segments and a generally horizontal segment therebetween, the generally vertical segments of adjacent ones of the brace members are parallel and overlap relative to each other, and the overlapping vertical segments are pivotally coupled together by the hinge brackets; and
- a seat assembly that is removably coupled to the frame assembly.

21. The bath safety device of Claim 20, wherein the frame assembly further includes at least one left-side armrest member and at least one right-side armrest member, and the left-side and right-side armrest members are generally U-shaped and inverted relative to the corresponding left-side and right-side brace members, wherein each of the hinge brackets includes a longitudinal body having two opposing end openings, wherein a first one of the end openings receives one of the side brace members and a second one of the end openings receives one of the side armrest members, wherein the side brace member and the side armrest member that are received in the hinge bracket openings seat together telescopically within the body and are releasably coupled together by a pushpin-and-engagement-hole assembly.

22. The bath safety device of Claim 21, wherein each of the hinge brackets includes at least one lateral semi-circumferential guide slot and at least two of the brace members each include a pushpin that is receivable in the guide slot to permit at least a 90-degree pivotal movement of the brace members with the pushpins, wherein the pushpins are depressible to a position out of the guide slots so that the brace members with the pushpins are removable from the hinge brackets, wherein the frame assembly is adapted for assembling and disassembling without the need for tools or hardware.